


Memorandum



Date: December 10, 2004

To: Honorable Chair Katy Sorenson and Members,
Budget and Finance Committee

From: George M. Burgess
County Manager 

Subject: Supplemental Information to Agenda Item 6B
City of Doral Section 8 Charter Amendment

B & F Supplement to
Agenda Item No. 6 (B)

The County Charter, as amended provides for the inclusion of pre-agreed conditions as part of the approval of new municipalities. The City of Doral incorporation vote was approved by the Board of County Commissioners in 2002 with the condition that regulatory control of a section of land (Section 8) within the boundaries of the City would remain with Miami-Dade County as pre-agreed condition of the incorporation.

This supplemental information is provided for Board consideration as it reviews the City of Doral's request that the County approve a city proposed charter amendment to remove language from the City's Charter regarding Miami-Dade County's regulatory control of Section 8, Township 53, Range 40, also referred to as Section 8. As a result of staff's evaluation of the City's request the following concerns are presented which may justify the County retaining jurisdiction over comprehensive planning, zoning, and building functions in Section 8.

Supply of Vacant Industrial Land

The square mile area referred to herein as Doral Section 8 lies within a larger area commonly known as Airport West. Its boundaries generally consist of Okeechobee Road to the northeast, the Homestead Extension of the Florida Turnpike (HEFT) on the west, State Road 836 on the south, and NW 72 Avenue on the east. This large area is one of the most significant industrial locations in Miami-Dade County; it could be called the industrial heart of the County. In 1994, the area contained 37 percent of all the active industrial land in the County; by 2003 that figure had risen to 44 percent, a total of 4,830 acres. Its importance was recognized by Armando Codina, one of the most respected major developers in South Florida during the Beacon Lakes Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) amendment hearings in 2001-2002. The application, which included a change to the Urban Development Boundary (UDB), was heavily justified by the argument that there was no equivalent location for first class industrial development. Given that in the year 2000 the area had 33,329 industrial employees, which was 27 percent of the County total, this appears to be an accurate assessment.

In recent years there has been a trend that may be a potential threat to industrial development throughout the County, including Airport West. This phenomenon was noted in the October 2003 state mandated Evaluation and Appraisal Report addressing the implementation of the CDMP, and it had to do with the conversion of industrial land to other uses, primarily commercial. A study done by the Department of Planning and Zoning showed that for a large sample of industrial land (about 5,600 acres), between 1985 and 2000, slightly more than 60 percent was put to a use other than industrial. This is an alarming number. Even the industrial hot spot of the County, Airport West, reflected this trend. In 1994, the combined in-use and vacant industrial land there totaled 7,880 acres. By the year 2003 the total had dropped to 7,228 acres, revealing that 652 acres of vacant industrial land had gone to another use. This occurred despite the addition of 571 acres from the Beacon Lakes and

to another use. This occurred despite the addition of 571 acres from the Beacon Lakes and Shoppylane CDMP amendments. The latest industrial land supply/demand assessment was done in July 2004 by the Department of Planning and Zoning. The data was for 2003 and it showed a depletion year of 2018 in Minor Statistical Area (MSA) 3.2 given the rate of absorption. If the 623.19 acres of industrial land contained in the recently filed Doral CDMP Amendment Applications 1 and 2 located in Section 8 was converted to the residential, office and commercial uses identified, the depletion year would drop to just under 2015. This would leave about 1,780 acres vacant, some of which would also be converted based on the current trend. If a rate of half the trend rate (30 percent instead of 60 percent) occurred, the supply would be exhausted by about 2011. Clearly, it would be very risky to allow the supply of prime industrial land in the County to be so diminished by conversion to uses that could occur elsewhere.

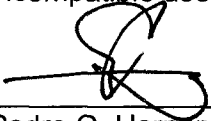
This current situation with respect to industrial land has prompted the Department of Planning and Zoning to undertake a thorough study of the status of this important resource in terms of both location and overall need for the future. This study should be completed in time for possible inclusion in the April 2005 CDMP amendment cycle. In the short term, it would be reasonable to defer a final decision on the City's request until this study is concluded.

While the conversion of industrial land for other uses is a major concern, and recognizing that residential uses are traditionally incompatible with major concentrations of industrial uses, the CDMP and the Zoning Code currently provide that Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND) may be permitted in Industrial and Office designated areas after meeting certain criteria. These include: 1) only where they are compatible with nearby development and with the objectives and policies of the CDMP, 2) where necessary services exist or will be provided by the developer, and 3) only where they are located adjacent to land already designated Residential Communities on the 2005-2015 Land Use Plan (LUP) map. TND's are self-contained developments that incorporate a broad mixture of uses (including residential, business, office and industrial) and are governed by specific design standards and other strict development criteria. One such specific requirement is that transition areas must be maintained so that non-residential uses within the TND must be oriented to adjacent non-residential areas outside the TND boundaries. If residential is to be considered in predominately industrial designated areas, it should only be in the context of TND's.

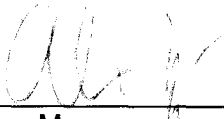
Land Use Compatibility

Aside from the implications for economic development, a strong argument can also be made that Section 8 should remain as designated, i.e. industrial, from a land use compatibility perspective. Section 8 is located in an area that is currently compatible with industrial development. It has been designated on the County's adopted CDMP Land Use Plan map as Industrial and Office since 1988, as well as most of the land located to the northeast, east, and south of this section. Of significance is the fact that Section 8 is located across from two major solid waste facilities, the Medley Landfill and the Recycling Center at the northeast corner of NW 90 Street and NW 97 Avenue and the Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) owned by the County and operated under a management agreement with the Montenay-Dade, Ltd., an affiliate of Montenay Power Corp. The RRF converts garbage into refuse-derived fuel that produces steam to turn two turbine generators. Energy produced from burning the fuel is enough to power the plant and supply the average power needs of 40,000 households a year. The Ash Landfill, located at the RRF, is the final disposal site for ash produced by the RRF. Also located at the RRF is a Trash Recycling Improvements facility. The RRF facility is designated on the CDMP Land Use Plan map as Institutional and Public Facility. Policy 1C of the Solid Waste Subelement

discourages changes to the LUP map that would permit land uses that are incompatible with the continued operation or planned expansion of these facilities. Residential uses are considered incompatible with solid waste facilities where spillovers, particularly noise and odor, can reasonably be expected. Therefore, from a land use compatibility perspective, major utility facilities, such as the RRF, should be buffered from potentially incompatible uses, and it is the County's responsibility to protect these public facilities from encroachment. It is no coincidence that the land surrounding the RRF was designated Industrial and Office; this was done to prevent the encroachment of potentially new incompatible uses, such as residential.



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